

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 6 and 8-14 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 1 and 7 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A molding process for manufacturing a molded article, comprising the steps of:

(a) preparing a mold having a mold cavity that has a shape conforming to that of the molded article;

(b) preparing a flexible hollow member and a supporting member, said hollow member having an open end and confining an inner passage that extends from said open end;

(c) inserting said supporting member into said flexible hollow member in a manner that said supporting member extends through said open end and into said inner passage in a direction along said inner passage so as to prevent said hollow member from collapsing during a subsequent molding step;

(d) placing an assembly of said hollow member and said supporting member in said mold cavity;

(e) closing said mold and introducing a molding raw material into said mold cavity around said hollow member to form a molded part around said hollow member in a manner that said open end of said hollow member is exposed from said molded part;

(f) removing said molded part together with said hollow member and said supporting member from said mold cavity; and

(g) withdrawing said supporting member and said hollow member from said molded part to form a channel in said molded part, said molded part being transparent, and said hollow member having a patterned outer face so as to form said molded part with a patterned inner face that confines said channel.

2. (Original) The molding process of Claim 1, wherein said inner passage has a curved section, and said supporting member is flexible in order to extend through and along said curved section when said supporting member is inserted into said hollow member.

3. (Original) The molding process of Claim 1, wherein said hollow member is a tube with a bent portion, and said supporting member is a flexible wire that extends through and along said bent portion.

4. (Original) The molding process of Claim 1, wherein said hollow member is made of silicone rubber.

5. (Original) The molding process of Claim 1, wherein said mold is formed with a positioning groove disposed externally

of and in communication with said mold cavity, said open end of said hollow member being positioned in said positioning groove so as to be exposed from said molded part, thereby facilitating subsequent withdrawal of said hollow member and said supporting member from said molded part.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) ~~The A molding process of Claim 1,~~
wherein for manufacturing a molded article, comprising the steps
of:

preparing a mold having a mold cavity that has a shape
conforming to that of the molded article;

preparing a flexible hollow member and a supporting
member, said hollow member having an open end and confining an
inner passage that extends from said open end;

inserting said supporting member into said flexible
hollow member in a manner that said supporting member extends
through said open end and into said inner passage in a direction
along said inner passage so as to prevent said hollow member from
collapsing during a subsequent molding step;

placing an assembly of said hollow member and said
supporting member in said mold cavity;

closing said mold and introducing a molding raw material into said mold cavity around said hollow member to form a molded part around said hollow member in a manner that said open end of said hollow member is exposed from said molded part;

removing said molded part together with said hollow member and said supporting member from said mold cavity; and

withdrawing said supporting member and said hollow member from said molded part to form a channel in said molded part, said supporting member ~~has~~ having a pulling end, and said mold cavity having an end portion, ~~said molding process further comprising a step of~~

preparing a flexible cap member ~~that has~~ having a peripheral wall defining a recess which has an enlarged portion and a reduced portion reduced from said enlarged portion, and ~~a step of~~

placing said cap member in said mold cavity in a manner that said peripheral wall fits snugly in said end portion of said mold cavity, ~~that~~ said open end of said hollow member ~~is~~ being fittingly received in said enlarged portion of said recess, and ~~that~~ said pulling end of said supporting member ~~is~~ being fittingly received in said reduced portion of said recess so as to permit exposure of said open end of said hollow member and said pulling end of said supporting member from said molded part, thereby facilitating withdrawal of said hollow member and said supporting member from said molded part.

Claims 8-14 (Cancelled)